

## **DO PARENTS NEED TO BE CITIZENS IN ORDER TO FILE FOR CHILD SUPPORT?**

NO! Neither citizenship nor residency is needed in order to apply for child support services. Child support services **must** be provided upon application by anyone in need of them, regardless of nationality.

## **DOES THE OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT INFORMATION COLLECTED TO THE IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (ICE)?**

Our agency does not collect information on citizenship status from applicants and are prohibited from sharing information collected from applicants with immigration officials and others who are not involved in the enforcement of child support.

Immigration and residential status in the U.S. is not a requirement for parents to receive child support services.

HOWEVER, under certain circumstances, child support agencies may be required to share information with other agencies, including immigration officials (e.g. grand jury or other court subpoenas, certain actions under the Patriot act, etc). In addition, if an illegal immigrant non-custodial parent (NCP) is arrested for non-payment of child support, the arrest may result in him or her being reported to the Department of Homeland Security and

possibly be removed from the United States. Therefore, in some cases, involvement in the child support program can have an impact on those with immigration concerns.

## **CAN OWING CHILD SUPPORT AFFECT A PERSON'S ABILITY TO GET A GREEN CARD (WORK PERMIT) OR BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN?**

Parents who owe child support can have trouble getting a green card or becoming a U.S. citizen. They are asked about child support on their application and those who owe child support arrears may be considered not to have "good moral character" and *may be denied*. It is best for them to take care of their child support responsibilities before applying to change their immigration or citizenship status.

## **DO DOCUMENTED OR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS NEED TO COOPERATE WITH CHILD SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS?**

Generally, yes. A documented or undocumented immigrant must cooperate with child support requirements to the same extent as anyone else receiving child support services.



## **HOW DOES THE CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY LOCATE A NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT WHO IS UNDOCUMENTED AND DOES NOT HAVE A SSN?**

These are some of the most difficult NCPs to locate, unless someone provides the location or they come in voluntarily. One of the first things to do in these cases is to check for an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) issued by the IRS. Undocumented workers, as resident aliens, can use it. The ITIN is a nine-digit number that always contains a 9 as the first digit and either a 7 or 8 as the fourth digit. It cannot be used to prove identity. The undocumented use the ITIN similar to a SSN; child support offices can ask the custodial parent (CP) for the NCP's ITIN (if known) in order to intercept funds for child support arrears. Other ways to locate these NCP's include interviewing the CP and any other relative, neighbor, former employer, or friend of the NCP that may provide a lead to the NCP's location (this may need to be done by the CP). Locate information includes: addresses, phone numbers, other names used, date of birth, ID numbers, SSN used, banking information, employers, criminal history,

vehicle license plate number, pictures and any other identifying information.

**WHAT IF THE PARENT IS NOW  
LIVING IN ANOTHER COUNTRY?  
WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO  
CONTINUE WITH THE PROCESS?**

The child support agency can check to see if Rhode Island has child support arrangements and or agreements with where the other parent is now living. The national OCSE website includes international resources at [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/international/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/international/index.html) You may also contact them at OCSE 370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., Washington DC 20201.

**ARE PARENTS REQUIRED TO HAVE  
A SSN TO ACKNOWLEDGE  
PATERNITY FOR A CHILD BORN IN  
THE U.S.?**

NO. Though, the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form asks for SSN's for both parents, the form can be completed even if one or both parents do not have their own valid SSN. They will need to have an ID that includes a picture, signature and date of birth.

**IF A FATHER'S NAME IS NOT ON  
THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE AND A  
MOTHER WANTS TO TAKE HER  
BABY TO ANOTHER COUNTRY,**

**WILL SHE NEED A NOTARIZED  
LETTER OF CONSENT FROM THE  
BABY'S FATHER?**

If the mother does not have proof of consent from the baby's father, she should get a reliable answer to this question from federal immigration authorities prior to making any plans for travel to another country, since she and the child may not be able to board an airplane or otherwise cross the border without proof of consent from the baby's father.



**Department of  
Human Services**

**OFFICE OF CHILD  
SUPPORT SERVICES**

**77 Dorrance Street  
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**FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS BY  
HISPANIC PARENTS**



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